

REMARKS

Of the 28 original claims, claims 2-6, 18, 20, 22, and 27-28 are amended. Claim 24 was cancelled in a previous communication. Claims 1 and 17 have been cancelled with this communication. Independent claim 29 has been added. With this response, claims 2-16, 18-23 and 25-29 are now pending and under examination.

Support for the amendments to the claims can be found within the specification as originally filed. Specifically, independent claim 29 has been added to recite a cover layer consisting essentially of the provided elements and to show the use of optional non-fibrous additives such as pigments, non-fibrous fillers, hydrophobification agents, and auxiliary materials in the composition. Support for this claim can be found at least on page 7 of the specification. Claims 2-6, 18, 20, and 22 have been amended to revise their dependency. Claims 27 and 28 have been amended to recite a cover layer consisting essentially of the provided elements.

Applicant authorizes the Commissioner to deduct any fees relating to this document required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 to 1.21 from Womble Carlyle Sandridge & Rice, PLLC Deposit Account No. 09-0528, referencing matter number 41461.0012.6.

I. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103

In the October 13, 2004 Office Action, the Patent and Trademark Office (“PTO”) rejected Claims 1-23 and 25-28 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,747,133 to Vinod, *et al.* (“Vinod”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,932,337 to Edinger, *et al.* (“Edinger”). Specifically, the Examiner has maintained the reasons for unpatentability as set forth in previous office actions.

Applicants have added new independent claim 29, which contains “consisting essentially of” language to describe the cover layer that now specifically includes only non-fibrous filler material/additives. The amendments to independent claims 27 and 28 also include “consisting essentially of” language to describe the cover layer.

Respectfully, Applicants maintain that Vinod and Edinger, either alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest Applicants’ claimed invention. Neither reference suggests combining the teachings. Furthermore, the two references do not teach or suggest all of the claim limitations for pending claim 29 and claims dependent thereon, nor the other pending independent claims. Accordingly, Applicant requests that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn, and the pending claims allowed.

CONCLUSION

In light of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding objections and rejections are respectfully requested. All amendments are made in a good faith effort to advance the prosecution on the merits. Applicant reserves the right to subsequently take up prosecution of the claims originally filed in this application in continuation, continuation-in-part, and/or divisional applications.

The Examiner is encouraged to call the undersigned should any further action be required for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,



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